

Shortgrass Country
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One of my purposes of attending the recent sheep and goat herders convention was to talk to the new chiefs to see if they wouldn't go along with Mr. Nixon when he goes to China. I might as well admit right now that I failed. The new officers showed about as much enthusiasm for the idea as they would have of cosponsoring the Miss Orlon pageant. In fact I wish now I'd left them alone.

The idea is a good one nevertheless. China has 800 million people. Watch any documentary film of the country and you'll see that nearly all 800 million of those people are hungry.

Very well. Our business is to raise beef and lamb. Then pray tell, what would be wrong with us offering to become agents to fill those 800 million stomachs? As a further service, we could agree to sell them enough wool and mohair to upholster every rickshaw in the Republic. Good faith could be proven by assuring them that we'd help keep such foreign devils as Argentina and Australia from tampering with the deal.

World peace would benefit from the program. Eating rice is what has made the Chinese so disagreeable. Back during the other depression of the 30s, I knew a family out here who had to winter on straight rice. They had two old dogs who had to get by on the same fare. By spring, those two dogs were so fierce they wouldn't let the shearing crew unload until the capitan had made the cook bury a box of rice he had in the chuckbox.

Missionaries have forever called folks in the Orient "heathens." Why certainly they are heathens. Try someday to be unheathen on a bowl of rice with nothing but a couple of sticks to gather it on.

Old Moses himself never would have taken to the Faith if he'd had to eat boiled rice three times a day. On rice, he couldn't have climbed a hill, much less a mountain and as to growing a long brush of whiskers, he wouldn't have been able to sprout a chin piece on the kind of food they eat in China. Go ahead and scoff, then count how many Orientals you ever saw who had a full set of whiskers.

I must not have polished the plan enough before presenting it to the new leaders of the sheep and goat herder's association. Those boys realize how desperately the industry needs to be known as unselfish patriots, instead of self-seeking businessmen. I might have been rushing them too much. A lot of times, a new administration can pick up more advice than it can front-line support.

Anyhow, it isn't often that the opportunity arises for us to pioneer a completely new set of customers. China will always be a problem as long as they don't have anything to eat but a lot of rice and some fishheads.